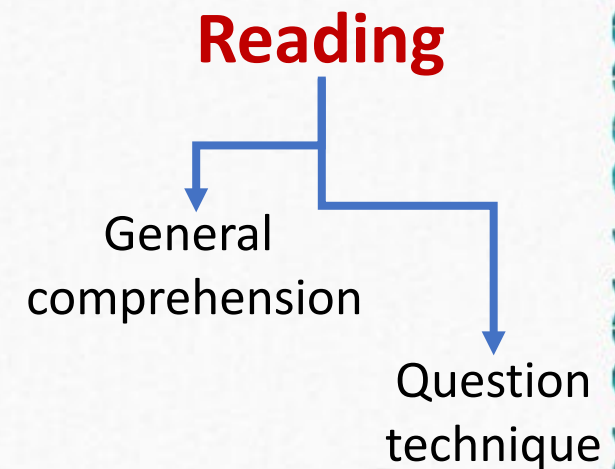
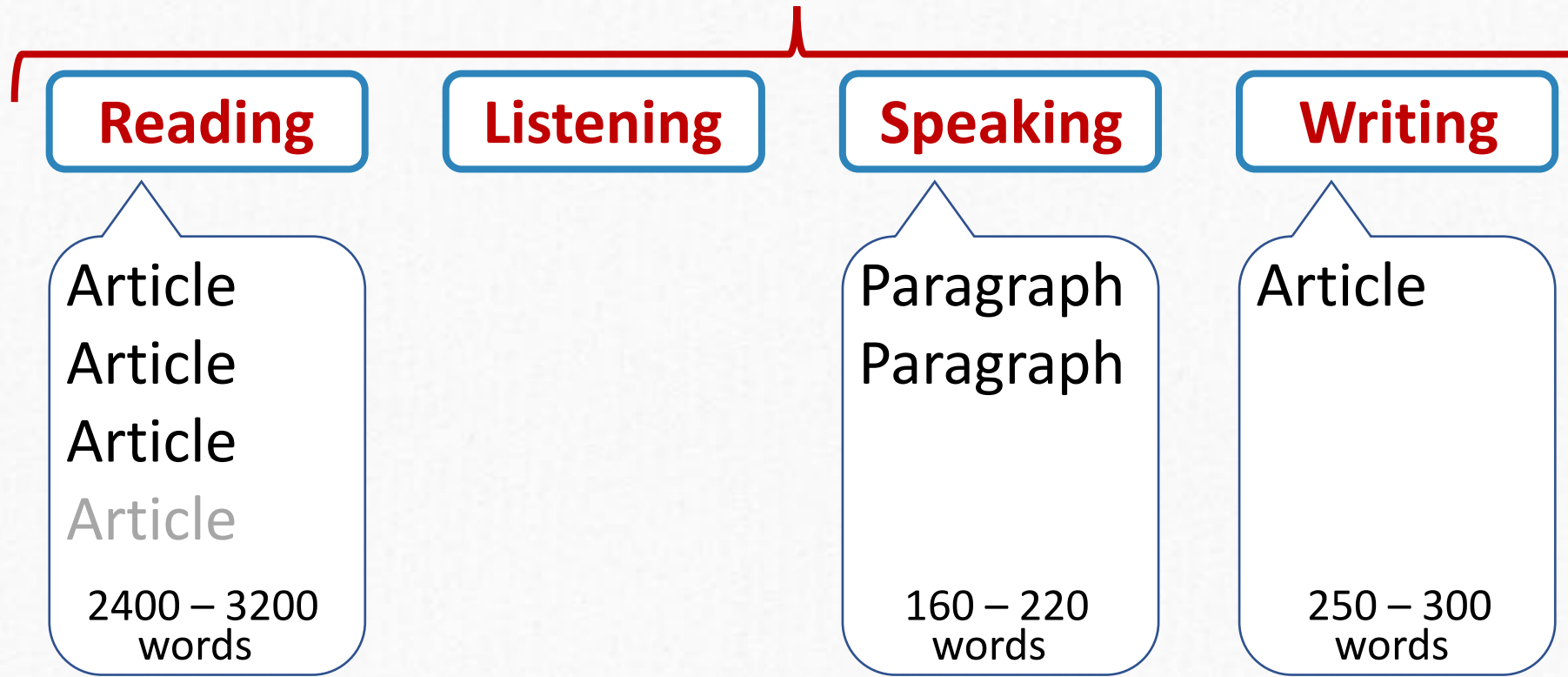


How to approach the reading section?

TOEFL Test



How to approach the reading section?

18 minutes
10 questions

Reading

Article
Article
Article
Article
2400 – 3200 words

When the Hawaiian islands emerged from the sea as volcanoes, starting about five million years ago they were far removed from other landmasses. Then, as blazing sunshine alternated with drenching rains, the harsh, barren surfaces of the black rocks slowly began to soften. Winds brought a variety of life-forms.

Spores light enough to float on the breezes were carried thousands of miles from more ancient lands and deposited at random across the bare mountain flanks. A few of these spores found a foothold on the dark, forbidding rocks and grew and began to work their transformation upon the land. Lichens were probably the first successful flora. These are not single individual plants; each one is a symbiotic combination of an alga and a fungus. The algae capture the Sun's energy by photosynthesis and store it in organic molecules. The fungi absorb moisture and mineral salts from the rocks, passing these on in waste products that nourish algae. It is significant that the earliest living things that built communities on these islands are examples of symbiosis, a phenomenon that depends upon the close cooperation of two or more forms of life and a principle that is very important in island communities.

Lichens helped to speed the decomposition of the hard rock surfaces, preparing a soft bed of soil that was abundantly supplied with minerals that had been carried in the molten rock from the bowels of Earth. Now, other forms of life could take hold: ferns and mosses (two of the most ancient types of land plants) that flourish even in rock crevices. These plants propagate by producing spores—tiny fertilized cells that contain all the instructions for making a new plant—but the spores are unprotected by any outer coating and carry no supply of nutrient. Most numbers of them fall on the ground beneath the mother plants. Sometimes they are earned farther afield by water or by wind. But only those few spores that settle down in very favorable locations can start new life; the vast majority fall on barren ground. By force of sheer numbers, however, the mosses and ferns reached Hawaii, survived, and multiplied. Some developed great size, becoming tree ferns that even now grow in the Hawaiian forests.

Many millions of years after ferns evolved (but long before the Hawaiian islands were born from another kind of flora evolved on Earth: the seed-bearing plants. This was a wonderful biological invention. The seed has an outer coating that surrounds the genetic material of the new plant, and inside it covering is a concentrated supply of nutrients. Thus, the seed's chances of survival are greatly enhanced over those of the naked spore. One type of seed-bearing plant, the angiosperm, includes all forms of flowering vegetation. In the angiosperm the seeds are wrapped in an additional layer of covering; these coats are hard—like the shell of a nut—for extra protection. Some are soft and tempting, like a peach or a cherry. In some angiosperms the seeds are equipped with gossamer wings, like the dandelion and milkweed seeds. These new characteristics offered better ways for the seeds to move to new places. They could travel through the air, float in water, and lie dormant for many months.

Plants with large, buoyant seeds—like coconuts—drift on ocean currents and are washed up on shores. Remarkably resistant to the vicissitudes of ocean travel, they can survive prolonged immersion in saltwater. When they come to rest on warm beaches and the conditions are favorable, the seed coats soften. Nourished by their imported supply of nutrients, the young plants push out their roots and establish their place in the sun.

By means of these seeds, plants spread more widely to new locations, even to isolated islands in the Hawaiian archipelago, which lies more than 2,000 miles west of California and 3,500 miles east of Hawaii. Grasses are simple forms of angiosperms that bear their encapsulated seeds on long stalks. In a surprisingly short time, angiosperms filled many of the land areas on Hawaii that had been bare.

18 minutes
10 questions

China has one of the world's oldest continuous civilizations despite invasions and occasional forays into the sea. The ceramics fall into three broad types—earthenware, stoneware, and porcelain—for which architectural items such as roof tiles, and modeled objects and figures. In addition, there was a group of sculptures made for religious use, the majority of which were produced in earthenware.

The function and status of ceramics in China varied from dynasty to dynasty, so they may be used as burial, trade, collectors' or even ritual objects, according to their quality and the era in which they were made. The earliest ceramics were fired to earthenware temperatures, but as early as the fifteenth century high-temperature stoneware were being made with glazed surfaces. During the Six Dynasties period (A.D. 265-589), kilns in north China were producing high-fired ceramics of good quality. Whiterware produced in Hebei and Henan provinces from the seventh to the tenth centuries evolved into top-grade porcelains of the Song dynasty (A.D. 960-1279), long regarded as one of the high points in the history of China's ceramic industry. The tradition of religious sculpture extends over most history but is less clearly delineated than that of stoneware or porcelains, for it embraces the old custom of earthenware burial ceramics with later religious images and architectural ornament. Ceramic pits include lead-glazed tomb models of the Han dynasty, three-color lead-glazed vessels and figures of the Tang dynasty, and Ming three-color temple ornaments, in which the motifs were outlined in a red of slip, as well as the many burial ceramics produced in imitation of vessels made in materials of intrinsic value.

Trade between the West and the settled and prosperous Chinese dynasties introduced new forms of different technologies. One of the most far-reaching examples is the impact of the fine ninth-century Chinese porcelain wares imported into the Arab world. So admired were these pieces that they encouraged the development of earthenware made in imitation of porcelain and instigated research into the method of their manufacture. From the Middle East the Chinese acquired a blue pigment, a form of cobalt oxide unobtainable at that time in China—that contained only a low level of manganese. Cobalt ores found in China have a high manganese content, which produces a more muted blue-gray color. In the seventeenth century, the trading activities of the Dutch East India Company resulted in vast quantities of decorated Chinese porcelain being brought to Europe, which stimulated and influenced the work of a wide variety of wares, notably Delft. The Chinese themselves adapted many specific vessel forms from the West, such as bottles with long spouts, and designed a range of decorative patterns especially for the European market.

Just as painted designs on Greek pots may seem today to be purely decorative, whereas in fact they were carefully and precisely worked out so that at the time, their meaning was clear, so it is with Chinese pots. To twentieth-century eyes, Chinese pottery may appear merely decorative, yet to the Chinese the form of each object and its adornment had meaning and significance. The dragon represented the emperor, and the phoenix, the empress; the pomegranate indicated fertility, and a pair of fish, happiness; mandarin ducks stood for wedded bliss; the pine tree, peach, and crane are emblems of long life; and fish leaping from waves indicated success in the civil service examinations. Only when European decorative themes were introduced did these meanings become obscured or even lost.

From early times pots were used in both religious and secular contexts. The imperial court commissioned work and in the Yuan dynasty (A.D. 1279-1368) an imperial ceramic factory was established at Jingdezhen. Pots played an important part in some religious ceremonies. Long and often lyrical descriptions of the different types of ware exist that assist in classifying pots, although these sometimes confuse an already large and complicated picture.

18 minutes
10 questions

One of the most difficult aspects of deciding whether current climatic events reveal evidence of the impact of human activities is that it is hard to get a measure of what constitutes the natural variability of the climate. We know that over the past millennia the climate has undergone major changes without any significant human intervention. We also know that the global climate system is immensely complicated and that everything is in some way connected, and so the system is capable of fluctuating in unexpected ways. We need therefore to know how much the climate can vary of its own accord in order to interpret with confidence the extent to which recent changes are natural as opposed to being the result of human activities. Instrumental records do not go back far enough to provide us with reliable measurements of global climatic variability on timescales longer than a century. What we do know is that as we include longer time intervals the record shows increasing evidence of slow swings in climate between different regimes. To build up a better picture of fluctuations appreciably further back in time requires us to use proxy records.

Over long periods of time, substances whose physical and chemical properties change with the ambient climate at the time can be deposited in a systematic way to provide a continuous record of changes in those properties over time, sometimes for hundreds or thousands of years. Generally, the layering occurs on an annual basis since the observed changes in the records can be dated. Information on temperature, rainfall, and other aspects of the climate that can be inferred from the systematic changes in properties is usually referred to as proxy data. Proxy temperature records have been reconstructed from ice cores drilled out of the central Greenland ice cap, calcite shells embedded in layered lake sediments in Western Europe, ocean floor sediment cores from the tropical Atlantic Ocean, ice cores from Peruvian glaciers, and ice cores from eastern Antarctica. While these records provide a measure of the natural variability of climate, they also show that the pattern of temperature variations in regional climate is not uniform.

What the proxy records make abundantly clear is that the climate over timescales longer than a few thousand years. Of the climate in the past 10,000 years (the Holocene period), climate from these records can provide a measure of its true natural causes of climate change have combined. These include atmospheric, the slower but equally erratic behavior of the extent of ice and snow. Also included will be any variations in activity, and, possibly, human activities. One way to estimate climate variability will combine it by using computer models much to represent the full complexity of the global climate about natural variability. Students suggest that to date the variability is considerably smaller than in data obtained from the proxy records.

In addition to the internal variability of the global climate system, there are external influences, such as volcanoes and solar activity. There is a physical variability has a measurable impact on the climate, our deliberations. Some current analyses conclude that volcanic activity has had a considerable amount of the observed variability in the period centuries, but that they cannot be invoked to explain the variability.

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18 minutes
10 questions

سام زرين مهر

Short format:
• 3 Articles
• 54 minutes
• 30 questions

Long format:
• 4 Articles
• 72 minutes
• 40 questions

How to approach the reading section?

REVIEW

BACK

NEXT

Time: 53:21

The word "attributed" in the passage is closest in meaning to

- accustomed
- credited
- exposed
- transformed

Chinese Population Growth

Increases in population have usually been accompanied (indeed facilitated) by an increase in trade. In the Western experience, commerce provided the conditions that allowed industrialization to get started, which in turn led to growth in science, technology, industry, transport, communications, social change, and the like that we group under the broad term of "development." However, the massive increase in population that in Europe was at first attributed to industrialization starting in the eighteenth century occurred also and at the same period in China, even though there was no comparable industrialization.

It is estimated that the Chinese population by 1600 was close to 150 million. The transition between the Ming and Qing dynasties (the seventeenth century) may have seen a decline, but from 1741 to 1851 the annual figures rose steadily and spectacularly, perhaps beginning with 143 million and ending with 432 million. If we accept these totals, we are confronted with a situation in which the Chinese population doubled in the 50 years from 1790 to 1840. If, with greater caution, we assume lower totals in the early eighteenth century and only 400 million in 1850, we still face a startling fact: something like a doubling of the vast Chinese population in the century before Western contact, foreign trade, and industrialization could have had much effect.

To explain this sudden increase we cannot point to factors constant in Chinese society but must find conditions or a combination of factors that were newly effective in this period. Among these is the almost complete internal peace maintained under Manchu rule during the eighteenth century. There was also an increase in foreign trade through Guangzhou (southern China) and some improvement of transportation within the empire. Control of disease, like the checking of smallpox by variolation may have been important. But of most critical importance was the food supply.

Confronted with a multitude of unreliable figures, economists have compared the population records with the aggregate data for cultivated land area and grain production in the six centuries since 1368. Assuming that China's population in 1400 was about 80 million, the economist Dwight Perkins concludes that its growth to 700 million or more in the 1960s was made possible by a steady increase in the grain supply, which evidently grew five or six times between 1400 and 1800 and rose another 50 percent between 1800 and 1965. This increase of food supply was due perhaps half to the increase of cultivated area, particularly by migration and settlement in the central and western provinces, and half to greater productivity – the farmers' success in raising more crops per unit of land.

This technological advance took many forms: one was the continual introduction from the south of earlier-ripening varieties of rice, which made possible double-cropping (the production of two harvests per year from one field). New crops such as corn (maize) and sweet potatoes as well as peanuts and tobacco were introduced from the Americas. Corn, for instance, can be grown on the dry soil and marginal hill land of North China, where it is used for food, fuel, and fodder and provides something like one-seventh of the food energy available in the area. The sweet potato, growing in sandy soil and providing more food energy per unit of land than other crops, became the main food of the poor in much

سام زرین مهر

One of the most difficult aspects of deciding whether current climatic events reveal evidence of the impact of human activities is that it is hard to get a measure of what constitutes the natural variability of the climate. We know that over the past millennia the climate has undergone major changes without any significant human intervention, but few variabilities can help quantify it. For water reserves, for instance, residence time which is the duration a molecule of water stays in a given reservoir has been decreased drastically. Regardless, much remains unknown.

Instrumental records do not go back far enough to provide us with reliable measurements of global climatic variability on timescales longer than a century. What we do know is that as we include longer time intervals the record shows increasing evidence of slow swings in climate between different regimes. To build up a better picture of fluctuations appreciably further back in time requires us to use proxy records.

Over long periods of time, substances whose physical and chemical properties change with the ambient climate at the time can be deposited in a systematic way to provide a continuous record of changes in those properties over time, sometimes for hundreds or thousands of years. Generally, the layering occurs on an annual basis hence the observed changes in the records can be dated.

To the extent that the coverage of the global climate from these records can provide a measure of its true variability, it should at least indicate how all the natural causes of climate change have combined. These include the chaotic fluctuations of the atmosphere, the slower but equally erratic behavior of the oceans, changes in the residence time indicating less stable water levels, and the extent of ice and snow.



1. Read par. 1
2. Move on to Qs

A set of horizontal blue lines for writing, with a vertical red margin line on the left side.

1. According to paragraph 1, which of the following must we find out in order to determine the impact of human activities upon climate?

- A)
- B)
- C)
- D)

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سام زرین مهر

- 1. Read par. 1
- 2. Move on to Qs
- 3. Answer par. 1 Qs

2. According to paragraph 2, an advantage of proxy records over instrumental records is that

- A)
- B)
- C)
- D)

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سام زرین مهر

1. Read par. 1
2. Move on to Qs
3. Answer par. 1 Qs
4. Read TS of par. 2
5. Do par. 2 Qs

3. According to paragraph 3, scientists are able to reconstruct proxy temperature records by

- A)
- B)
- C)
- D)

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3. Answer par. 1 Qs
4. Read TS of par. 2
5. Do par. 2 Qs
6. Read TS of par. 3
7. Do par. 3 Qs.....

4. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in the passage? Incorrect choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- A)
- B)
- C)
- D)

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4. Read TS of par. 2
5. Do par. 2 Qs
6. Read TS of par. 3
7. Do par. 3 Qs.....

5. The word “erratic” in the passage is closest in meaning to

- A)
- B)
- C)
- D)

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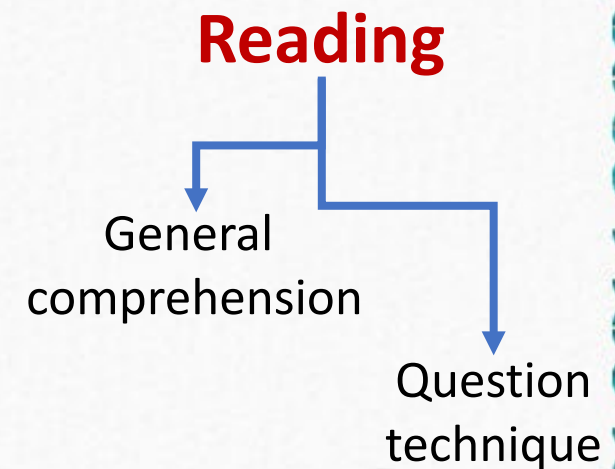
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4. Read TS of par. 2
5. Do par. 2 Qs
6. Read TS of par. 3
7. Do par. 3 Qs.....

Course syllabus

What to expect?

Session No.	Content to Cover
Session 1	Reading approaches, factual questions
Session 2	Factual questions, Negative factual questions
Session 3	Review, vocabulary questions, reference questions
Session 4	Inference questions, review
Session 5	Purpose questions
Session 6	Sentence summary questions
Session 7	Text insertion questions
Session 8	Review, prose summary questions



Course syllabus

What to expect?

Question type	Identification	Frequency (per passage)
Factual Questions	none	3 to 4 items
Negative Factual Questions	Includes “NOT” or “EXCEPT”	0 to 1 item
Vocabulary Questions	Highlights 1 or 2 words	2 to 3 items
Reference Questions	Asks what a pronoun/relative pronoun refers to	0 to 1 item
Inference Questions	May include phrases such as “is suggested,” “is implied,” “can be inferred,” or “can be understood”	0 to 2 item
Purpose Questions	Asks about why the author has added a sentence/idea, either directly or indirectly	1 item
Sentence Summary Questions	Highlights 2-3 sentences	1 item
Text Insertion Questions	Gives 4 squares in the text	1 item
Prose Summary Questions	Is always the last question	1 item

سام زرین مهر

The Golden Rules of Reading

The 3 Rules of Reading

1. *Always focus on ideas behind
the words, not the words themselves.*

**1. Find the
distinguishing idea(s)**

**2. Scan to find them
in text**

Factual Questions

Basics

Conservation biologists have long been concerned that species extinction could have significant consequences for the stability of entire ecosystems—groups of interacting organisms and the physical environment that they inhabit. An ecosystem could survive the loss of some species, but if enough species were lost, the ecosystem would be severely degraded. In fact, it is possible that the loss of a single important species could start a cascade of extinctions that might dramatically change an entire ecosystem. A good illustration of this occurred after sea otters were eliminated from some Pacific kelp (seaweed) bed ecosystems: the kelp beds were practically obliterated too because in the absence of sea otter predation, sea urchin populations exploded and consumed most of the kelp and other macroalgae.

Q: According to paragraph 1, what was the result of the removal of Pacific sea otters?

- The kelp and sea urchins were destroyed by new predators.
- The uncontrolled population of sea urchins ate most of the kelp plants.
- Without sea otters, the kelp beds soon became overgrown.
- Macroalgae remained as the primary population in the ecosystem.

1. Find the distinguishing idea(s)
2. Scan to find them in text
3. Find their pertinent “slice”
4. Check for connections (if any)

Factual Questions

Delving Deeper

Assessing the impact of the army on the civilian population starts from the realization that the soldiers were always unevenly distributed across the country. Areas rapidly incorporated into the empire were not long affected by the military. Where the army remained stationed, its presence was much more influential. The imposition of a military base involved the requisition of native lands for both the fort and the territory needed to feed and exercise the soldiers' animals. The imposition of military rule also robbed local leaders of opportunities to participate in local government, so social development was stunted and the seeds of disaffection sown. This then meant that the military had to remain to suppress rebellion and organize government.

Q: What effect did military occupation have on local population?

- A) It encouraged more even distribution of the population and the settlement of previously undeveloped territory.
- B) It created a discontent and made continuing military occupation necessary.
- C) It required local labor to construct forts and feed and exercise the soldiers' animals.
- D) It provided local leaders with opportunities to participate in governance.

1. Find the distinguishing idea(s)
2. Scan to find them in text
3. Find their pertinent "slice"
4. Check for connections (if any)

The Golden Rules of Reading

The 3 Rules of Reading

- 1. Always focus on ideas behind the words, not the words themselves.*
- 2. When in doubt about the range of the pertinent slice, read more!*

- 1. Find the distinguishing idea(s)**
- 2. Scan to find them in text**
- 3. Find their pertinent "slice"**
- 4. Check for connections (if any)**

Factual Questions

Delving Deeper

How did the first tetrapods make the transition to a terrestrial habitat? Like early land plants such as rhyniophytes, they made only a partial transition; they were still quite tied to water. However, many problems that faced early land plants were not applicable to the first tetrapods. The ancestors of these animals already had a circulation system, and they were mobile, so that they could move to water to drink. Furthermore, they already had lungs, which rhipidistians presumably used for auxiliary breathing. The principal changes for the earliest tetrapods were in the skeletal system—changes in the bones of the fins, the vertebral column, pelvic girdle, and pectoral girdle.

Q: According to paragraph 5, what was the main way that the earliest tetrapods differed from their immediate fish ancestors?

- A. The tetrapods had a different skeletal structure.
- B. The tetrapods had more sources of food available
- C. The tetrapods had a circulation system.
- D. The tetrapods could move to new pools of water.

1. Find the distinguishing idea(s)
2. Scan to find them in text
3. Find their pertinent “slice”
4. Check for connections (if any)

Factual Questions Consolidation

Evolutionary biologists believe that speciation, the formation of a new species, often begins when some kind of physical barrier arises and divides a population of a single species into separate subpopulations. Physical separation between subpopulations promotes the formation of new species because once the members of one subpopulation can no longer mate with members of another subpopulation, they cannot exchange variant genes that arise in one of the subpopulations. In the absence of gene flow between the subpopulations, genetic differences between the groups begin to accumulate. Eventually the subpopulations become so genetically distinct that they cannot interbreed even if the physical barriers between them were removed. At this point the subpopulations have evolved into distinct species. This route to speciation is known as allopatry (“allo-” means “different”, and “patria” means “homeland”).

Note: This is the first paragraph of TPO 31

1. Find the distinguishing idea(s)
2. Scan to find them in text
3. Find their pertinent “slice”
4. Check for connections (if any)

Factual Questions Consolidation

Geographic isolation can also proceed slowly, over great spans of time. We find evidence of such extended events in the fossil record, which affords glimpse into the breakup of formerly continuous environments. For example, during past ice ages, glaciers advanced down through North America and Europe and gradually cut off parts of populations from one another. When the glaciers retreated, the separated populations of plants and animals came into contact again. Some groups that had descended from the same parent population were no longer reproductively compatible – they had evolved into separate species. In other groups, however, genetic divergences had not proceeded so far, and the descendants could still interbreed – for them, reproductive isolation was not completed, and so speciation had not occurred.

Q: According to paragraph 3, separation of subpopulations by glaciers resulted in speciation in those groups of plants and animals that

- A) Were reproductively isolated even after the glaciers disappeared
- B) Had adjusted to the old conditions caused by the glaciers
- C) Were able to survive being separated from their parent population
- D) Had experienced some genetic divergences from their parent population

1. Find the distinguishing idea(s)
2. Scan to find them in text
3. Find their pertinent “slice”
4. Check for connections (if any)

Wrap Up

What did we learn today?

- **General format of the reading section in TOEFL**
- **Course syllabus**
- **Steps to solve factual questions**
- **2 of the 3 Golden Rules of Reading**
- **Practices**

See you next session! ;)